1877

My dear Maria

The rheumatism has attacked me in my knees & made me hobble about, but Dr. Vasplin his electricity every morning & I'm getting on well, but my walking is but so so & I can't do ½ a mile — The October weather is very fine & I can visit almost every day for an hour

A Photo for Charles I'll send but it's so bad I'm ashamed & must have one done from life — yet I thought I was the only man in the world who had not been photographed

Poor Caroline I hope to return[ed] also here is much discontent, for lazy people begin to rot & the industrious are taxed very heavily I'm obliged to have a new Carpet for the old one is so patched that I am in danger of stumbling, as my room is 50 feet from corner to corner the expense will cripple me for awhile but my good Doctor will get me a 2d hand one

The Romans are building Hotels of such

a rate that the City will be all Hotels – the fact is the English pay such large sums – Rome is changed & become a clean city with all kind of improvements

My Walter has become very artistocratic & is always showing off, but the Italians say "that every one has his own particular brand of madness"

Now my Cama is framed it looks well finished & I may sell it – some 10 years I have been upon it at intervals – but I cannot always paint yet I pass my time pleasantly – reading the papers & so on – I am lucky in not having to dine alone

When Eleanor comes I shall be very gay & glad & hope to be able to receive her & her husband as I did Walter & his wife

I am always pondering over my early life & think of my dear Father who took such care of me he had one defect, he used "to draw the long bow" this I found difficult to get rid of – ah! how many things I have had to get rid of!!!

8th 2 mar writing this when yours of the 3d came – I am glad to say that my hands are much better & I improve daily, Eleanor is not come, nor even yet written! so I don't know her plans

Your loving brother Joe

at Xmas & the new year in my house there were excellent dinners, but I eat little on these occasions & am not always over merry as I used to be in [redacted] where my memory often carries me to wonder at [redacted] my poor dear Father — but he had one great defect he was used to draw the long Bow"

Hoping this may find you comfortable as it leaves me at present

your loving brother Joe